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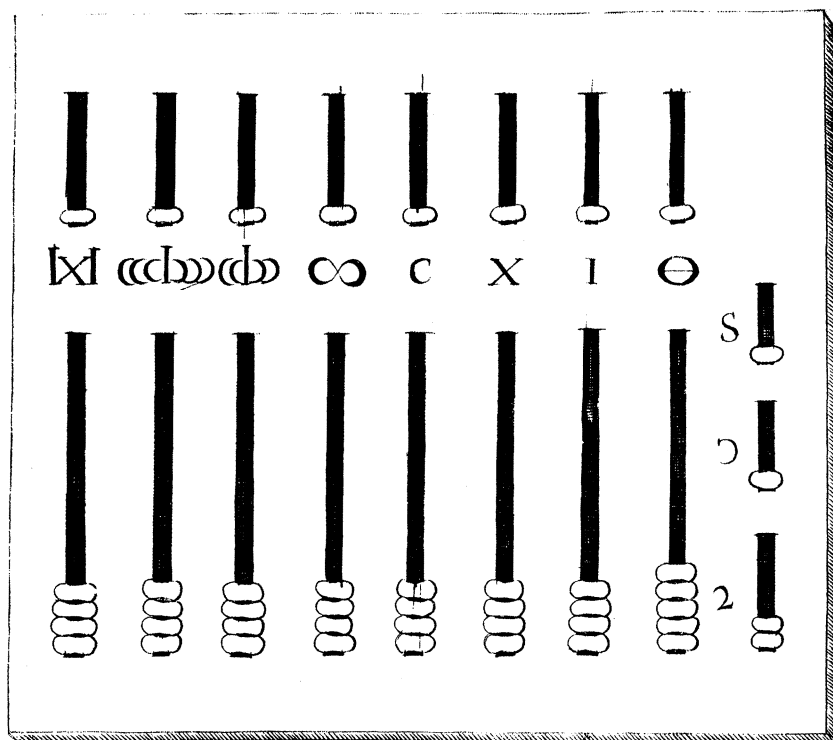
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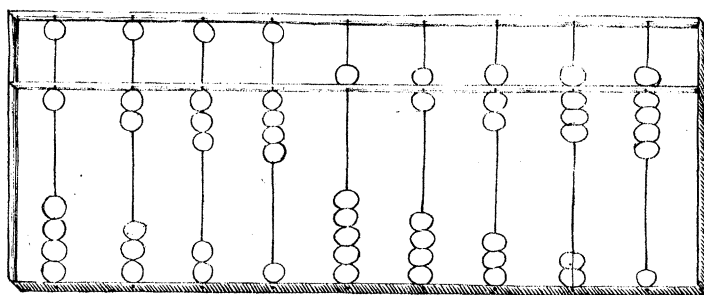
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The Roman Abacus Out of Marcus Valseus



The Chinese Abacus from the Chinese Dictionary containing 9 places or degrees



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[illegible]

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千九百一十六年五月十三日

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天	天	tién
原	原	yuén
又	又	yeu

which was not more than 25 or 30 dayes Journey. This Map it seems must be kept very Secret in *Muscovy* : for the next Day the *Muscovite* was in despair, for having given it, saying that if it should be known he should come to great Dammage. The Officer being come back since into *France*, has given a Copy to the King, and another to *Monseur Le Marquis de Seignelay*. To confirme this it may be added, what a *French* Man has writ from *Muscovy* within this two Monthes, that they are actually Raifing Troops, to go to War with the *Chinese*.

Some Observations, and Conjectures Concerning the Chinese Characters. Made by R. H. R. S. S.

Made by R. H. R. S. S.

Whether there ever were any Language Natural, I dispute not : But that there have been, are and may be artificial Languages 'tis not difficult to prove. The *Chinese* Court Language is said to be of this kind, invented and Spoken by the *Literati* and *Mandarins* throughout the whole Empire of *China*, differing from all the other Languages spoken in it, and I conjecture it to be nothing els but the names of the Characters by which they write and express their meaning, Arbitrarily Imposed by them, as we in *Europe* set names to Arithmetical Figures, not as we pronounce words written with a Literal Character. This I Judge by comparing the Characters with the Names, Monosyllables or Words they Pronounce and read them with. Nor do they ascend above a Monosyllabical Name tho' the Character be composed of many single Characters, each of which hath its proper Sense and Monosyllabical Name, And though the meaning of each Character, be an ingredient in the Notion of that compounded Character.

I might give an Instance also in the Artificial Language,

Invented by the Late Reverend Bishop of *Chester* *Dr. Watkins*, which in all the accomplishments of Language doth excel any one yet extant ; to which is also annexed a real Character, Legible into that or any other Language Spoken. By which Language the Character and every additional Mark is effable, and yet the Character is not Literal but real, which is more curious and useful than the *Chinese* way. Great pitty it is that Discourse is not published in Latine, that the Learned of *Europe*, may think of further Improveing it, and bringing it to Use.

But whatever we may judge of Language, 'tis past dispute that Writing was ever Artificial, how Antiently soever it were in Use, and was the Invention of some thinking and Studious Men. Tis also evident that there have been various ways thought of for Expressing Significancy, according to the several *Genii* of the Persons that were the Inventors. As may be guessed by the *Ægyptian* Hieroglyphicks, the *Chinese* Characters, the *Mexican* Chronology, and the Literal Characters of several Nations, each of which seem to proceed upon differing method , and from differing thoughts of Invention.

Which of these ways is the most Antient, is hard to Prove. The *Ægyptian Mummys* and *Obelisks* prove a great Antiquity of the Hieroglyphicks, but yet the *Chinese* Chronology (if to be credited) outstrips the *Ægyptian* in pretence to Antiquity. For the *Chinese* make *Fohi* the first King of *China* to be the Inventer of their Character : And account him to have Lived 2950 *Years* before the time of *Christ*, dureing all which time they pretend to have a certaine and written account in their Books : But their account of the times preceding, they esteem more Hypothetical and Fabulous ; depending chiefly upon Fiction and Oral Tradition : As you will easily believe, when you understand how many years they make it since the Creation of the World to the present year 1686. which by the account thereof in Mr. *Graves* his translation of *Vlug Beig*. will be found to be no less then eighty eight millions six hundred and fourty thousand
one

one hundred and two Solar Years, there having been run out since the Creation 8864 *Ven.* of Years (every *Ven.* containing ten thousand such Years) and of the present *Ven.* this Year 1686 is the 102d. Which account is abundantly more extravagant than the *Ægyptian* : but this need not Invalidate their History since *Fohi* ; by which it appears that their Character was invented before the time of *Moses* about 1400 Years, and even before *Menes* the first King of *Ægypt* about 500 Years. So that the *Chinese* Invention of Writing or Characters, seems to be the most Antient of that kind. And the Book *Yekim* said to be written by *Fohi*, the most Antient Book.

These Accounts made me the more desirous to understand somewhat of the Reality and Truth, of what is related concerning the Knowledge of Literature and Manual Arts, which these people of *China* are said to have possessed so long a time in so great Perfection, and without Alteration from the Primitive Institution, especially upon the account of their Art of Printing, which gave a hint to the Inventors of that admirable and most useful of all Inventions (for the Common Wealth of Learning) the way of Printing here in *Europe*. For *Paulus Jovius* affirms that the first Occasion of that Invention in *Germany*, was a *Germane* Merchant, who returning out of *China* into his own Country, Related what he had observed concerning the Practise of it as used in that Country. And tho' the *Chinese* way be wholly differing as to the method of composing, from what was Invented and Perfected here : Yet such an intimation was enough to an Ingenious Artist to improve the first Contrivance, and make it more accommodate to the Literal way of Writing with us : And as our way may possibly be now brought to the greatest Perfection for exactness and expedition, so without doubt must be their way of Printing any thing just as it is written, Since I find, that they can Ingrave their Stamps for a sheet, as soon as one of our Composers can set and correct a sheet of our Literal Character, and when so

done one Man alone will print off 1500 Sheets in one day' And tho' tis generally believed to be much the same with our *Wooden Cuts* for Printing, yet from some Observations I have made, I believe it to be much another way; of which I shall hereafter say more when I describe their other Arts of Pottery, Staining, Vernishing, &c.

By a *Chinese* Manuscript, out of which I transcribed the Lords Prayer in the Year 1666 (when it was lost) I found that the Pronuntiations had no Affinity with the strokes of the Character. Whence I conceived it was either a numeral Character consisting of Numbers, or else a real Character, but not a Literal, unless it were a Litteral Character of some other Language than that by which it was Pronounced, whose pronuntiation is lost though the Significancy be retained, as if one should Read what is written in *Hebrew* כְּרַאשִׁית כְּרַא into the *Latine* or *Roman* Language, *In Principio Creavit* instead of *Brasit bra.* or *Beresith Bara* according to the *Masorethæ*.

Since that time I procured from *China* a Dictionary of the Court Language, (as I found it written upon by the person that sent it me from thence) But this whole Book (which I found was Printed) consisted only of the *Chinese* Characters without any interpretation, or Pronuntiation, however by the help of the picturs of that, and a *Chinese* Almanack, I quickly found out their Characters for numbers and their way of Numeration, together with the Figure and use of their *Abacus* or counting Board, for performing the Operations of *Arithmetick*, which I find pretty near to agree with that of the Antient *Romans* (A Description and Picture of which is given by *Urfinus*, *Pignorius* and *Velferus*) save only that, instead of pinns, and sliding Grooves of the *Romane*, the *Chinese Abacus* hath Strings or Wires and Beads, to slide upon them; and that, instead of four pinns for Digits or Unites, the *Chinese* hath 5 beades: so that it may seem to argue that the *Chinese abacus* was designed for a *Duodecimal* Progression: Whereas that of the *Romans* was designed for the *Decimal*.

One thing is remarkable in the *Chinese*, that I find the places in the *abacus* to lie *horizontal*, and their first place to be that next the left hand, which I judge was also the first in their old way of reading, much the same with ours, though their other Characters are erected (as I shall by and by shew) from the posture of Writing and Reading, which I conjecture they did at first make use of, and what does yet further agree with this conjecture, is remarkable in the newly mentioned Treatise of *Vlug Beig*. That whereas the way of Writing and Reading used by the *Arabs*, was from the right to the left, the first place or the place of Units in their Numeration, was that next the right Hand; and so came first to be read: as did that of *China*, who as I conceive read the contrary way, from the left to the right.

It appears therefore by this remark that we received this way of expressing Numbers from the *Arabians*, for that we keep the same posture or position of places with them, though our progression in Writing and Reading be the contrary way. And though we now Read them also in the order they are set, twenty one, twenty two, thirty six, forty eight, &c. yet we retain also the other way of Pronouncing, *viz.* one and twenty, two and twenty, six and thirty, eight and forty, &c.

Now as the *Chinese* and *Roman Abacus* do much agree save only that they proceed contrary ways, so doth their way of expressing Numbers by Letters or Marks, one stroke or line signifying one, two lines, two, three lines, three, a cross ten, two crosses, twenty, three crosses, thirty, and so onwards to a hundred, which they expressed by a square mark, and a cross with a stroke added for a thousand, as will appear by the Table annexed. And though the Characters are not all the same; yet the order & method of one agrees very near with that of the other, especially if I may be allowed my supposition, that the Primitive way of Writing and Reading with the *Chinese* was Horizontal, and like the *Greek* and *Latine* or *European* way. Now that these are properly

perly numeral Figures or Characters, is manifest from this, that they have also word Characters for every Number, And they can (in the same manner as the *Romans* could) express a Number by their numeral Characters or Marks, and by their Litteral or word Characters ; for as one single stroke signifies one or the first, so does the Character (*in the plate marked with E*) signify the same thing, that is one or the first.

Having thus discovered their Characters for Numbers, and their way of Numeration, I was next desirous to understand something concerning their Language and Character.

Upon Perusing all the Accounts I could meet with in Books, I found very little satisfaction as to what I principally inquired after, which was first concerning the Method of the Character, whether it consisted of a certain Number of Marks Methodically disposed like Letters in a Literal, or like Numbers in a Numeral or like Radicals in Composite and Decomposite Derivations ? 'tis said to be Legible into a great many Languages considerably different one from another, but how this is effected is not related, only 'tis said that the marks are of the Nature of our Arithmetical Figures, (which are become almost Universal at least to us here in *Europe*,) and secondly, concerning the Number of these Characters ? to which I found as little satisfaction, for, by some Relations I found that there were 120000, by others 80000 and by others 60000. And that a man must be able to remember to Write and Read at least 8000, or 10000, before he will be able to express his meaning thereby, & that it is the business of a Man's whole Life to be thoroughly understanding in the whole Character ; seeming to intimate that the Characters are Immethodical, and there are as many Primitive Characters as Words. Others tell us of various kinds of Characters which have been in use in several Ages. The first they say were *Hieroglyphical* like the *Ægyptian* or *Mexican* consisting of the Pictures of Animals and Vegetables. But that the last are made up of Lines and Points, that they have no such thing as Letters or

Sylla-

Syllables, but every distinct word and notion has a distinct Character, & that all are primitive or in composiſt, So that if *Calepines* Dictionary were to be tranſlated into the *Chineſe*, 'twere neceſſary to have as many diſtinct Radical Characters as there are words therein to be found. which accounts do ſeem to infinuate that this Character is the moſt Difficult, and the moſt perplexed piece of Learning in the World, & depends wholly upon the ſtrength of the memory in retaining the form & ſignification of a perplexed ſcraul. But whether they who gave us theſe accounts did do it knowingly, is much to be doubted, my own Obſervations, at leaſt, make me think otherwiſe.

I have not yet been able to procure ſufficient helps to Inform my ſelf of the whole Art of Writing and Reading the *Chineſe* Character, and I fear the Relations I have hitherto met with concerning it, were written by ſuch as did not well underſtand it, however from ſuch helps as I had, what I collected or do conjecture, I ſhall here relate. The beſt help I had, was the Peruſal of ſome Books Printed in *China*, with the Pronuntiation and Signification of the Character in Latine Letters. By theſe Books then I obſerved, Firſt, that every one of their Characters whether conſiſting of more or fewer ſtrokes or marks, were compriſed within a certain ſquare ſpace, which is proportion'd according to the bigneſs of the ſize or manner of Writing, they deſigne there to make uſe of, not that the whole Square is filled with every Character, but that no part of that Character does exceed the Limits of that Square, ſo that though the Character have but one ſtroak it takes as much room in the line as another that hath 20 or 30 ſeveral marks, ſo that their Characters are moſt exactly ranged in Rank and File, not unlike our Numbers in Arithmetick.

Notwithſtanding which, I find they do vary the bigneſs of the Character upon ſeveral Occaſions, as in the Titles of Books, in the Titles of the Chapters or Sections, in the Comments Explications or Notes, and upon ſeveral other occaſions of Variety, which they do at Pleaſure with their Pencil, as we uſe variety of Letters in the Printing of a Book. The

Titles

Titles of Books are generally in very large Characters, 6 or 8 times as big as those of the Book, the Explication notes † of the bigness, the contents usually twice as big, and the like variety on several other occasions. I have met with also three several kinds of Characters, the most usual is the fixed or set square form. The second sort is the Running hand in which the orders of the Courts are written by their Secretaries, of which I have seen 3 or 4 kinds, in which the Pencil is never taken off till the whole Character be Finished, and sometimes 2 or 3 are all written without break. The third seems to be somewhat like the flourishing great Letters used by Scriveners at the beginning of Deeds, and by the *Germans* in the beginning of Chapters and Sections. They are compounded of the same strokes as the set Character, but modulated and shaped a little otherwise to make them appear the more beautiful and regular. A Specimen of each of these three are in the plate. This third is made use of for Epitaphs and other Inscriptims on Buildings or Monuments. These 3 sorts I may call the three general kinds of writing, but there is to be found an almost infinite variety of forms, which men use. This will be the more easie to be believed, when we consider that the Printed Characters are exactly the same with the written. insomuch that every variety in each stroke, line or point, that is or can be made with the Pencil, is perfectly expressed in the Impression, and the forme mode, or hand, as we call it of every Writer is exhibited so curiously, that I think it hardly possible to be performed after the way of wooden Cutts as Authors affirm it is, but must be done after the Method of our Coppercutts, printed by a Roule-press, which the way of expressing the Running or Court-hand, does, I conceive most evidently demonstrate, and from divers Circumstances, I could evidently make appear from the Book it self, which I cannot so well express in writing. Their Paper is generally very thin and fine, and very transparent, but brown, so that what ever is Written or Printed on it, is almost as Legible

on the back, as on the fore-side which is of great use in the cutting of their stamps. And thence they never write or print on both sides of the same leaf but only on one, and to make the leaf appear printed on both sides they double the sheet with the printed sides outwards, and putting the folded part forward, they sew, bind or stitch together, all these sheets by the cut edges, and upon whole sheets instead of single leaves; just in the same manner as the plate annexed to this discourse is printed. They begin the book on the top of the right hand side of the page that is next the right hand, and they read downwards to the bottom, then begin the next line towards the left hand at the top, and so read to the bottom, and so proceed to the end of the book. But this I suppose not to be the primitive or first way of writing or reading. The Title of the Book is set first upon a whole Leaf, usually of a thicker Paper, and some Title is likewise written upon the folding or edge of every Sheet, where is set also the Number of the Book, and the number of the Sheet, half of which appears on one side, and half on the other side of the fold.

As to the Character it self, (I find by all the books and writings I have yet met with of that kind) that each of them is made up of a certain number of strokes, lines, or marks, which are very distinct from each other in their shape and position, and by reason that these are single strokes, and as I conceive uncompounded, I think they may be called the Letters, Elements, or Particles, out of which the more compounded Characters are constructed or contexted. These are the first kind of which there are but a very few, And I think those I have described in the 13th line of the Plate are all.

Two, three, four, or more of these joynd together in a certain order and contexture (in the doing of which there is a great Regularity and order observed, which is not varied from, and all within the regular square space) I conceive do make Syllables or Primitive Radical Characters,

each of which have a primitive single or distinct notion or signification as well as sound, which is made much use of in the more compounded Characters or Words. Of this kind I take the Figures of the Numbers to be : If at least they are not single Letters like the way of expressing Numbers in the *Hebrew Greek Arabick*, &c. Languages, for though there may be two or three of the single strokes joynd together into a compound Character, it hinders not, but that it may still signify a Letter, as in the *Greek* Α Α. Δ. Ι. Γ. ΙΙ. Τ. In the *Runick* ; where every Letter hath one upright line and some other additional marks : In the *Roman* I. L. F. E. O. Q. V. Y. Or it may signify a Syllable as in the *Æthiopic*, and in the *Hanferet*, and *Sanscrit* Languages and Characters : The first of which being the *Brackmans* Character we find in *P. Kircher's China Illustrata*, described by *P. Roth* who studied it 7 Years ; and the second (being a Literal Character used over all *India* by the Merchants) I have seen in a Transcript, brought lately out of *India* by a very Worthy Gentleman who lived there many Years, and had the curiosity to cause to be transcribed and translated also into English, A Dictionary of their Language in their own Character : who did me the favour to let me peruse it.

In which Characters or ways of Writing a Vowel is always joynd with a Consonant into one compound Character to make it effable. And then the single strokes may be taken for single Ineffable Letters as are the Consonants, and the Composition of two or three (of which one at least may be a Vowel) will make Syllables.

Of this kind, there are not so many in the whole *Chinese* Character, but that it will be easy enough to assigne each a proper Monasyllable which shall only have one or two Consonants, and one or two Vowels : That is the Consonants together and not separate, either both behind the Vowel or Vowels, if it be a diphthong or both after it or them.

Of this kind, I understand there are about 500, probably 8x8x8. or 512. I could enumerate a great many, and give you also the name or words by which they are pronounced as also their signification, but (as I said before) first, I conceive the present *Chinese* Language to have no affinity at all with the Character, the true primitive, or first Language, or pronounciation of it haveing been lost. And secondly, I want some further help to make a full and compleat Discovery : what I have learnt from the Book of *Fohi* I shall give the next opportunity ; which will explain the reason of the multiplication of 8. and the order and method of places in the Letter or word Square.

The third sort of Characters, is a decompounded sort being made up of two three or more of those of the second kind, diminisht proportionably in their size, either as to their length, or breadth, or both, from what they have in the same Writing when they are single and fill up the whole Letter Square or Words Square. For there being several of them to be crouded together within the same Square, according as there are more in number, so they are always more squeezed together. In this Decomound sort, there is a Regular order observed in the placing of the several Characters of the 2d. sort ; there being some that are always on the Left side, some always on the Right, some at the top, some at the bottom. Of which I doubt not but that they have a certain Regular Method, which had we Dictionarys, explained would be easie enough to be Discovered.

This method alone of crouding together all the Characters (how many soever go to make up the decompounded Character) into one square (which is of the same size for the most Simple and for the most Compound) seems to be the great Singularity, by which the *Chinese* Characters differ from those of all the rest of the World. And this I conceive has been the Reason why all People, and possibly even the very *Chinese* themselves have, and do believe it to be a Real and not a Literal Character : For if the Primitive Lan-

guage, or Pronuntiati^on of the Characters be lost (as I conceive it is) and that the disposition, order, method, texture, or manner of placing the more Simple in the more Compounded Characters be also lost, forgotten, or not understood ; then the whole Characters becomes a Real and not a Litteral Character : And an Immethodical one to such as want a method, that must be learnt by roat and depend wholly upon the strength of the Memory to retain it. But I conceive it might be at first either a Litteral Character, and so the whole square Character was composed of so many distinct Letters or Syllables, which composed the word signified thereby ; And so there might be a regular order of placing these Letters in the Character, That is, that the whole square being divided into so many parts, there was a Rule which was the first *2d.* *3d.* and *4th.* place ; so that there being placed in those the several Letters that made up the word, according to the order they had in the word, it was easy by that Rule to Decipher the said Character, and thence to finde the word and the Signification, As Regularly as if the Letters had been written one after another, as most other Litteral Characters we know are at this day written.

Or Secondly, it might be a Real Character consisting of divers Marks or Letters, that expressed so many simple Notions, several of which joyned together might make up the more compounded Characters, of which I have added some examples in the Plate which may be also made Litteral and Pronouncable, tho' that consideration were not made use of when they were first invented. What things I have Observed in my *Chinese* Books that seem to respect this method, I will give more particulars of by the next opportunity, by Printing a Specimen of the Book *Ye-kim* which explicat^{ed} by these Notions will I conceive appear more Intelligible, than by the accounts we find given of it by the *Chinese* commentators, and those that have translated them into Latine, who seem not to have understood the true design thereof: for
both

both the *Chinese* and *European* Commentators assert it to be a Conjuring Book, or a Book to tell Fortunes by, and to be made use of by the *Chinese* for that purpose; whereas by the small Specimen I have seen of it, I conceive it to contain the whole Ground, Rule or Grammer, of their Character, Language and Philosophy, and that by the understanding of it, the Foundation and Rule of their Language and Character, may be without much difficulty Deciphered and Understood.

The present use of this Character, I conceive to be differing from what it was at first, both as to the position of Writing and Reading it, and as to the Expression and Pronunciation thereof.

For the way of Writing and Reading it, I conceive might at first be exactly the same with that of the *Greeks*, *Romans*, *English*, and all other *European* Nations, and also the *Æthiopic* and *Coptick*. That is, they began at the top of the Page towards the left Hand, and so proceeded towards the right in the *Horizontal* Line to the end of it, and then began at the left end of the next line under the first and proceeded with that in the same manner, and so with the next under that and all the remaining. Continuing to Write the words of the line towards the right Hand, and the lines of the Page one under another till the whole Discourse were compleated, joyning leaf to leaf one under another, after the same manner as the *Roules* are at present Writ, and as the *Volumina* were of the *Antients*. And to make the parts of the Volume to be the more easily to be come at, without the trouble of Rouling and unrouling as the *Ancient Romans* did, and we do with our *Roules* they contrived to fold them, like the folds of a Fan, forwards and backward: and so stitching them together, that the written sides might lye outwards, and open freely one from another, and the fair sides might meet together, it came to make the present form of their book, which being laid as we generally place our books before us, they seem to begin at the top of the page on the Right-hand, and to proceed to the bottom, and then at the
top

top of the next line towards the Left-hand, and descend as in the former ; proceeding in this order with all the rest, which way must needs be very Inconvenient for writing, however they may use their Pencil differing from our Pen. Though there be a way of Writing from the top to the bottom of the Page, which is very convenient for Writing the Syriack, as also for Writing Latine, English, or Greek where the Writing is to be used for cutting the stamps of Wood, or Graving of Copper Plates with the same Character for Printing, in which Cases the Letters must be written backwards.

Secondly, as to the Pronunciation of this Character, by the Court Language, or by any other now used, I conceive it to be wholly differing from that of a Litteral Character, that is from being pronounced or spoken according to the Marks or Figures thereof, whether they be simple or compounded and made up of Simple Characters (though there are some instances of affinity in Characters and Words.) The reason of which differing pronunciation I conceive may have proceeded, partly from the loss of the Primitive Language, for which it was made, partly from a most inconvenient affectation of Monasyllabical Words in this Court Language, to help the poverty of which, they are fain to make one Syllable to signify many differing Notions, to do which they have introduced a kind of Musical toning or accenting of each of them, and that not single but compound of two or three tones to each signification of every one of these Monasyllables : Partly from the using of this way of Writing, by divers Nations of Differing Languages, who minding only the Figure and Signification, Read it into their own Mother Tongues, as we in *Europe* do Arithmetical Figures : and partly, also from the omission of most Grammatical Distinctions, the same Character serving for Substantive and Adjective, Singular and Plural, in all Cases, (save only they have some Characters for Particles as *of* and *to* in English) for the Verb in all Tenses, and numbers, &c.

for the Abstract and the concrete Signification, and for divers Metaphorical; if at least the Interpretation I have met with in the Books I have perused be exact: Partly, also from the *Syntaxes* of them, it being necessary to consider the whole Sentence to Discover which Part of Speech each Character is of, in that Sentence, wherein the order and positions of the Characters to one another, for which they have Rules, hath its Signification: And lastly, from the loss of the very Notion of a Literal Character, whence for the Expressing of Proper Names, they are fain to make use of several Characters, whose sounds or words come nearest to the sounds of the Syllables of that Name, as in the Plate *tam, jo, van*, for *Adam. Jovan*.

Now, though I conceive this Character is not Effable properly as a Literal Character by any of their present Languages. And though possibly it might be at first a Real Character, that is each of them compounded of such strokes or marks as by their Figures Positions and Numbers in the Square, denoted the several Philosophical Ingredients, that made up the Notion of the whole Character, as the book *Ye Kim* seems to shew by giving Rules as I conceive for the Order and Significancy of places in the Square, &c. Yet I think it not difficult to make it a Litteral or at least a Syllabical Character, and Legible into a Language somewhat after the manner of the Universal Character I mention'd before. And tho' this would not be the Primitive Language for which it was made, yet for the present uses of it (the chiefest of which is the assisting and refreshing the memory, and helping the imagination by proper sounds) it might be as good: wherein the single Characters might be Monosyllables and the compounded disyllables trisyllables, &c. According to the Number and Order of Simple Characters in the Square of the Compounded. And I am apt to think that the present pronounciation of Languages, as of *Hebrew, Syriack, Arabic, Greek and Latine*, or any other Language that has been

so long written, may be as much differing from what it was 2000 Years since, as an Arbitrary one now invented, and grounded on the Letters, might possibly be. And such an Arbitrary pronounciation, if generally agreed upon, might serve *As well* for a help to learn the Signification of words, or *Word Combinations* of Characters, as if we now knew the exact Primitive Pronounciations, as Critically as the *Masorethæ* are said to have done that of the *Hebrew*; and possibly also *Much better*, for that by such a one a great many Irregularities and Difficulties of Pronounciation (which are to be found in all Languages now spoken) might be omitted, and the whole made exactly Regular and easy, as might be shewn in the *Hebrew* and *Greek*, and especially in the *Arabick*, whose difficulties are sufficiently manifested by *Alphabetum Arabicum*, Printed at *Rome* 1592. Now as by such a Language the Character might be made Effable without Musical Tones or Difficult Aspirations, so had we Dictionaries of the Signification of the Characters, we might as soon learn the *Chinese* Character, as we can *Latine*, or any other Language to be learnt by Book, and not by Speaking.

IMPRIMATUR,

John Hoskyns, *Vice P. R. S.*
 July 17th, 1686.

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